United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Chairmen's peace plan is "only mechanism available for re-establishment of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina", according to report by Secretary-General; urges Security Council to approve the whole peace package and to call upon Bosnian Serbs to sign the remaining two parts.

+ Secretary-General proposes extension of UNPROFOR mandate for further interim period of three months; says "more time" is needed before negotiations can be brought to "meaningful conclusion"; cost estimate for new period is $336 million.

+ Signing of Agreement on national reconciliation by Somali participants at conference in Addis Ababa welcomed by Secretary-General.

+ Security Council concludes, following consultations today, that "there was no agreement" to lift sanctions regime imposed on Iraq under resolution 687 (1991).

+ Bangladesh UNTAC peace-keeper dies of wounds received at attack two days ago in Angkor Chum, north-west of Siem Reap.

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The peace package put forward by Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, provided the "only mechanism available for the re-establishment of peace, justice and respect for human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina", according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

In his report to the Security Council, dated 26 March, on the progress of the peace talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Boutros-Ghali therefore strongly urged the Security Council to approve the whole peace package and to call upon the Bosnian Serbs to sign the remaining two parts "so that attention may be concentrated henceforth on the implementation of the plan".

The Secretary-General wrote that after seven months of intensive negotiations only one side -- the Bosnian Serbs -- now "lags behind" in

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signature of two of the four documents making up the overall package, namely the provincial map and the agreement on interim arrangements.

The Secretary-General also recommended the early establishment of an International Human Rights Monitoring Mission that all three sides have already accepted, and a Boundary Commission, as recommended by the Co-Chairmen.

The report finally recommended that any enforcement of the no-fly zone, tightening of sanctions, or the placing of United Nations military observers around the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), should now be accompanied by the Security Council's "unqualified" endorsement of the peace package.

The overall peace agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, worked out during the past seven months of negotiations, is contained in four separate documents. Two of them -- the constitutional principles and the military agreement -- have been signed by all three parties. The two remaining parts, pertaining to the map and the interimn arrangement, have been signed by the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Croats.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed to extend the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) for a further interim period of three months, until the end of June. The Security Council had first set a 31 March deadline for the Croatian Government and the Serb populations living in Croatia to reach an agreement which would serve as basis for recommendations on the Force's future mandate.

However, in a his report, dated 25 March, the Secretary-General writes that "more time will be needed" to bring the negotiations on this issue to a meaningful conclusion and warns that any termination of UNPROFOR's presence in Croatia would probably lead to "an outbreak of renewed hostilities".

The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia have held several rounds of talks both in Geneva and in New York with representatives of the two parties concerning the situation in the United Nations Protected Areas and the Serb-controlled "pink zones". While some progress has been made in those talks, the Secretary-General says, "fundamental differences remain between the two sides".

The total cost of maintaining UNPROFOR for the period from 1 April to 30 June, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate, would be $336 million, according to the Secretary-General's recommendations. Of that amount, some $195 million would be used for UNPROFOR's deployment in Macedonia and the humanitarian operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the signing of the agreement on national reconciliation by the leaders of the 15 Somali political movements at the Conference in Addis Ababa on Saturday, 27 March, and has urged the Somali leaders to begin work immediately on the practical arrangements for the implementation of the Agreement.

In a statement issued at Headquarters today, he called the agreement "an important achievement of the Somali people" and noted that it represented the first positive step following the Security Council's decision on Friday to deploy a 28,000-member United Nations peace-keeping force in Somalia. The Agreement provided "an auspicious beginning for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II)" as it prepared to assume its expanded responsibilities sometime after 1 May.

Under the Agreement, the Somali participants have committed themselves to put an end to armed conflict and to reconcile their differences through peaceful means. They also pledged to comply fully with the cease-fire agreement that was signed in Addis Ababa last January, including the handing over of all weapons and ammunition to the Unified Task Force and UNOSOM II.

The Secretary-General welcomed the fact that the Agreement ensures the presence of at least 18 women on the Transitional National Council, which constituted an important breakthrough for Somali women who played a very constructive role at the Conference, the statement said.

According to a United Nations spokesman today, the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Somalia, Lansana Kouyate, had meet with Somali intellectuals who had attended the Addis Ababa meeting. They represented over 850 Somali intellectuals from all over the world, many of whom were preparing to return to their country and participate in the rebuilding of Somalia. Mr. Kouyate also chaired a meeting of the political movements to discuss follow-up action to the Agreement.

The Committee on the Cease-fire and Disarmament was scheduled to resume its meetings tomorrow, 30 March, at UNOSOM II Headquarters in Mogadishu, the spokesman said.

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The Security Council today concluded that "there was no agreement" among Council members to lift the sanctions regime imposed on Iraq under the so-called cease-fire resolution 687 (1991).

The Council's decision comes after four of the five Permanent Representatives to the United Nations - namely France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States - on Friday, 26 March, warned the Iraqi Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoon, that any provocative actions from Iraq would "receive a firm response" from the coalition.

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Speaking to correspondents today, the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, stated that "among Iraq's many unfulfilled obligations" were that they had not allowed any long-term monitoring by United Nations agencies of their weapons programmes. In addition, she said, they had not ceased the massive repression of their civilian population and had not accepted the United Nations demarcated boundary between Iraq and Kuwait.

The Security Council reviews Iraq's compliance with the Gulf war ceasefire resolutions every 60 days.

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A Bangladesh soldier serving with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) has died of wounds received at an attack two days ago in Angkor Chum, north-west of Siem Reap.

According to the spokesman for UNTAC, the identity of the approximately 80 attackers still remained unknown, but it was alleged that the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) had the responsibility of the raid for which mortar and small arms fire had been used. He said UNTAC would contact their representatives in order to conduct an independent inquiry.

The spokesman said that there were currently 15,000 UNTAC peace-keepers spread out on a large territory in order to guarantee peaceful elections. Despite the attack, there would be no forces added in Siem Reap, he stated.

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